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# WEEK 1: TECH DETOX BOOTCAMP



## Day 1: BLOCK EVERYTHING

We begin with a useful challenge: A week with no social media and as little internet as humanly possible.

### Today's Intention

This course is about developing the skills to be around the internet all the time and make healthy choices without needing extra supports other than your own choices. But to begin with, we'll cut out as much as possible. This is to give you some space, to see that you can live and function without checking your phone every ten minutes. We'll take a step away, gather some new tools, and then return to the challenge with fresh eyes, ready to grow something that's more useful to us. In the following weeks of the course, we'll gradually introduce more time around the internet and reduce any restrictions, firewalls, apps, etc that you're using during the first week.

As mentioned above, for this first week, use whatever will be useful to you. If you want to lock your phone up in the trunk of your car overnight, lock that in the garage and fill the garage up with angry sharks to keep you away from it, that's up to you.

### Support Yourself

1. Block sites. Do it right now before your brain notices what's going on. You know the sites you frequently visit that get you sucked into compulsions. There are multiple website blocking apps and browser extensions for your laptop. Grab one and try it out. Many will even let you set time limits on
2. BE HONEST & KIND. You know you've tried to do this through anger and judgment and shame and every other mean thing you can do to yourself. Consider that's actually part of the compulsions we get hooked on. We often self-sabotage and turn ourselves into problems to fix. Let's take a step away from that. Blocking these sites is an act of kindness to yourself. Give yourself a vacation from shame and judgment.

## Day 1: BLOCK EVERYTHING

3. Give yourself an easy-to-access activity you can choose instead: This isn't about saying you'll give up social media and replace it with a serious physical fitness practice for the first time in your life. Starting a physical fitness practice would be a challenging change on its own

Have something you can do instead of the internet - create a smorgasbord of options for yourself so it's easy to choose. Get some interesting books or magazines and have them by your computer so you can choose them instead. Or setup a painting or drawing station beside your computer so you can grab that when your brain is screaming at you to just check that pointless website one more time. Have something ready beside your bed so you're not lying there with only your phone to pickup.

### Is today the right day to start?

What a wonderful and unexpected coincidence! Today is actually the perfect day to start. We've already checked your astrological charts, your blood type, the balance of your Big 5 Personality Traits, and your Myers-Briggs Type. For optimal chances of success, they all point directly to today being the ideal day to begin making healthy changes and learning new skills. Your brain might throw up some totally rational-sounding reasons to put things off until a special, magically perfect date in the future it swears will be a much better time to start. Brains love to procrastinate and make excuses to delay useful changes. Luckily, today is the perfect day, so you can thank your brain for its ill-intentioned input and get things moving.

### Should I binge compulsions one last time?

This is another trick that brains love to pull on us. You've probably already noticed that bingeing on compulsions one last time and then promising yourself you'll quit for good this time, hasn't worked out for you. It generally has the opposite effect. You might make it a few days and then only crave the compulsions even more! We find that it's more effective to simply walk away from the compulsions. There are some websites or apps you'll simply never use again. You can let them go. No special ceremony necessary.

## Day 2: WHAT DID YOU COVER UP?

When you don't have a screen in your face every moment of your life, you may suddenly notice that you've been using technology to cover up some uncertainties, emotions, insecurities, trauma, etc.

Now you can begin to see them.

### Today's Intention

Notice how the brain tries to push you back into using your phone or your computer when you don't need to. Notice what it craves when the internet isn't an option for you. What fears is it reacting to? What uncomfortable physical sensations trigger it?

We've often used the internet as an easy ritual to feed some need. And it's not that the need is necessarily bad. It's just we haven't learned how to interact with it in a healthy way. For example, somebody might be flipping through a dating app to get matches to reassure themselves that they're likeable. They love the high they get from the notification of a new match, and they chat with that person for a bit, maybe even go on a date, and then ghost them to hunt for more matches to reassure themselves that they're likeable. So the thing to work on there really isn't an addiction to the matchmaking app like they might have initially thought. The thing to work on here is that need to reassure themselves they're likeable. There are probably some issues to dig into around relationships, maybe some difficult experiences in the past where they felt unliked, maybe bullied, maybe there was a bad breakup. That's going to be the real work to do. So don't lose sight of what you discover underneath when we remove the online compulsions. You could say we're removing these compulsions just to find out what's underneath. The online compulsions are merely an easy sedative.

## Day 2: WHAT DID YOU COVER UP?

### EXERCISE

Draw what you're trying to fix with the internet. What are you chasing? What do you want to get? What are you covering up?

1. To do this, grab a piece of paper and draw three horizontal stripes and four vertical stripes. The three horizontal columns give you morning, day time, and night. We often use the internet differently at different times of day. And in that first vertical column, draw yourself during that time of day.
2. In the second column, draw and write what you do online at each of those different times of the day. You might just write some website names, or draw a logo for an app, or you can do something more detailed if you want to show the actions you're doing, like if you're trolling people, or compulsively shopping, or trying to hookup.
3. In the third column, draw and write the things you're trying to cover up, chase after, or control. Are you posting photos to get reassurance that people like you? Are you comparing yourself to others on social media? Avoid the challenges of human interaction because of painful past experiences? Just reacting to the uncomfortable urge to play a game again and again until it's perfect?
4. In the final column, identify the skills you want to build. Draw or write them in there. The previous column was identifying needs. Maybe we've been chasing those needs in a way that we now see is unhealthy for us and not truly delivering what we want. By understanding that we can find healthier ways to meet our needs or learn how to interact with urges and other brain stuff differently, so we're not played like puppets by our brains or our phones.

## **Day 3: EXPLORE CHANGE**

Be curious and explore supports to sustain change as you push into the challenging physical and mental experiences of breaking old habits.

### **Today's Intention**

Openness is the name of the game. Open to doing things differently. Open to dropping old habits. Open to having difficult physical and emotional experiences. Open to having a craving or an urge and allowing it to be there but not react to it. Open to learning how to support yourself by making new practices easier, by learning new skills that might have seemed impossible in the past.

So much of this work is simply about getting awesome at change. Whether we're working on big changes around beliefs and feelings we've been covering up, or it's the practical changes of using social media differently, clicking on different choices on websites, etc, those are both about change.

Getting skilled at change in life and understanding why change is challenging, will help you succeed with and sustain changes around how you use technology. You can't expect to be awesome at change in only one specific area of your life. It's something we can work on everywhere. So today's exercise is about doing something differently, with openness, and awareness, to understand better why change is challenging.

### **EXERCISE**

Change an action you regularly do. It can be anything. It doesn't matter if you judge it as good or bad. It could be as simple as the route you walk to school, or the order you get every day at your favorite coffee shop. Today, do it differently. And be a scientist. Grab a piece of paper and write or draw what happens before, during, and after making the change. Did you decide to do it in the morning but then forget because you didn't put it in your schedule? Does the brain think up reasons why tomorrow is a better day to change things up? What's challenging? What helps support you? How do you feel? Where do you feel it? What are you doing in your head?



## Day 4: GET AWESOME AT DISCOMFORT

As long as you believe you need to get rid of boredom and uncomfortable feelings, the brain is going to use that to get you back into old habits again and again.

### Today's Intention

Today we introduce one of the most challenging and useful techniques we will explore in this course: the practice of doing nothing. We're going to get bored, and not do anything about it.

Many people will approach boredom as different from other feelings they struggle with and do compulsions around. They might want to learn how to deal with anxiety or depression or regret or jealousy, recognizing now that the old ways of trying to control and avoid them has only fueled the problem, but people often see boredom as something they should get rid of. The thing is, boredom is no different. The more we try to avoid and control boredom, the more we feel it, and the less capable we are of handling it.

As long as the brain knows it can use boredom to push you back into old compulsions, guess what? You're going to experience A LOT of boredom. So throughout the weeks ahead, changing your relationship with boredom will be a key component of changing your relationship with all of the other brain stuff that can come up when we break our old online habits.

### But I don't want to be lazy. I want to be productive!

How much time and energy have you wasted online? All that clicking and searching and scrolling was a ton of work. You've been working unpaid overtime for your brain and the VCs that benefit from inflated start-up valuations you keep propped up by opening apps repeatedly. Learning how to do nothing is about learning how to go slow so that we can go fast later. This is about learning how to handle uncomfortable experiences so you can choose to spend your time and energy on things that actually matter to you. The weeks ahead in this course are all about that. By learning how to pause and allow feelings to be there, even feelings of boredom or laziness, you're putting yourself back in charge of your actions.

## Day 4: GET AWESOME AT DISCOMFORT

### EXERCISE

In the very first exercise, when you cut out the online compulsions, one of the supports we suggested was to have something you could choose to do instead, like a book or a sketchpad. But that was for helping ease our way out of the compulsion by giving us a distraction. Long-term, it's also not sustainable to need to shove a book in your face every time you feel an urge to check social media. We've got to build up the skill to have an uncomfortable experience, like an urge or boredom, and allow them to be there. That's what we'll start to practice with today's exercise. There are two ways you could do this exercise. Pick the option that makes the most sense for you, and enjoy doing nothing!

1. Identify a time when you've been using your distraction instead of grabbing your phone or going online. When that time comes up today, practice spending a bit of time simply being. You don't have to do anything inside or outside of your head. You don't have to plan things and have conversations in your head. You don't need to fill up the time with anything. You can be. That is a wonderful, amazing accomplishment all on its own. See how long you can go for and if it begins to get too uncomfortable, have your favorite distraction support ready and enjoy going back to that.
2. Schedule in time for doing nothing. Maybe walk to a park and sit on a bench, or grab a seat at your kitchen table and have coffee, or maybe wait for the bus and simply be there, waiting. There is no need to do anything else, inside or outside of your head. You don't have to plan things and have conversations in your head. You don't need to fill up the time with anything. You can be. That is a wonderful, amazing accomplishment all on its own. See how long you can go for and if it begins to get too uncomfortable, have a valued action you can choose to do, and thank your brain for trying something new. It'll get better and better at learning to sit.

## Day 5: SUSTAIN CHANGE UNREASONABLY

Shame, stress, anger, self-hate, social pressure, anxiety and all of that fun stuff are weak fuel for change. Bouncing off of rock bottom is not a sustainable way to live.

### Today's Intention

If we only do healthy things when we feel terrible and life is a disaster, we're actually making terrible feelings and disasters a prerequisite for action and doing anything useful in life. It fuels an unhelpful cycle of waiting for things to get bad, then improving them enough to escape the bad feelings, quitting the healthy practices, and then waiting until everything is terrible again before starting the cycle all over.

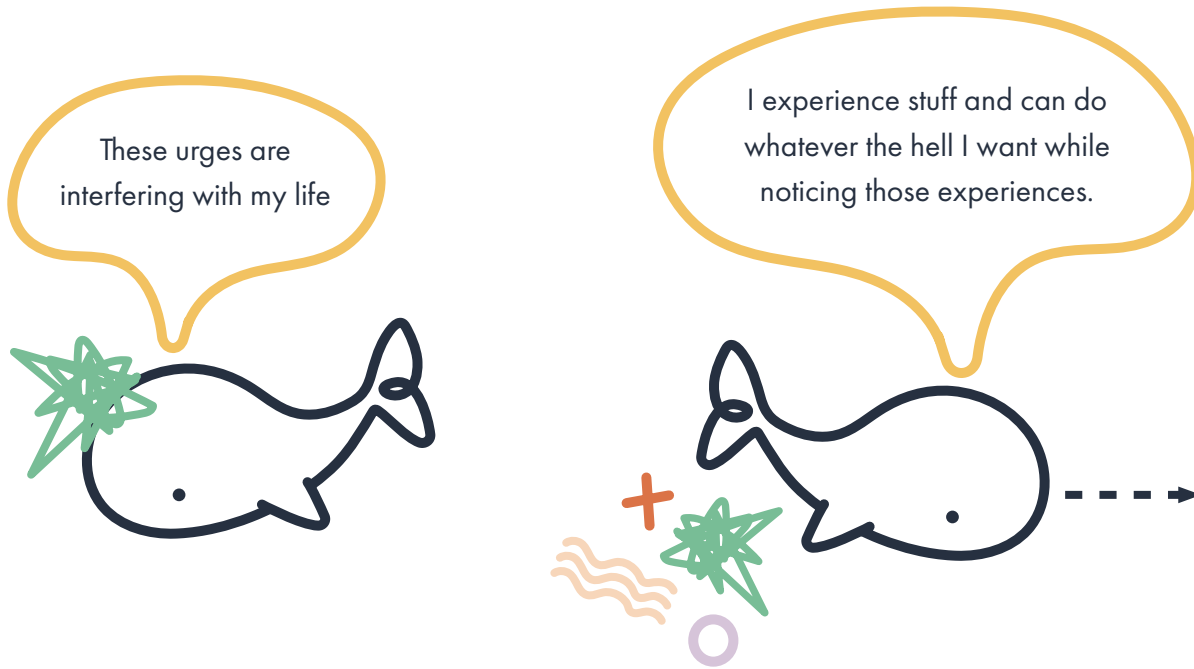
It's useful to break that cycle unless you want to keep doing this again and again. So our intention today is to explore sustaining a change and practicing that action simply because it's a thing we do. This isn't about getting anything. It's not about trying to fix urges or escape intrusive thoughts or avoid some bad event or emotion. This is about learning to change when you don't feel the pressure to change. That is going to be key to sustaining any healthy change.

In the next section, we shift our focus online to doing things we value and making an impact in the lives of those around us or our communities or the world. That gives us a direction to move in and it becomes our new fuel for action. But there won't be anybody forcing us to choose that direction. It's all about us cultivating that energy within to take actions independently and proactively.

### EXERCISE

Pick one of the changes you already explored this week and try doing it again simply because it's a thing you do. It could be yesterday's practice of doing nothing, or the random change you explored earlier in the week. Bring curious to the practice. What is challenging about this? What uncertainties and resistance does the brain throw up? How can you support yourself? How can you enjoy this experience?

## CONTACT US



If you have any questions as you're working through the course, send us a message to:

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